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ABSTRACT

Moroleon, Guanajuato (Mexico), is an industrial city on the Mexican Plateau. People from the surrounding hamlets known as rancherias frequently seek employment in the city. However, many men with low levels of education travel to Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, to work on mushroom farms. A study explored the use of English in these two communities. Eighty-three interviews were conducted in Moroleon and in Kennett Square. Findings indicate that the use of English operates as a social marker. Migrants returning to Moroleon use it to impress those who have not migrated to the United States. Their interaction with the rest of the population creates a mixture of admiration, rejection, and envy among members of the Moroleon community. The youngest generation, those with only an elementary level of education, and people who moved from the rancheria to the city favor this social marker. These speakers incorporate lexical loans in their speech in spite of their limited knowledge of English. They mainly transfer nouns and verbs that are content lexical loans. They also include a functional word, the interjection "oh si." The use of English in Spanish decreases with increasing social status. Professionals in the higher ranks of society do not use English in their speech although some of them are former migrant workers. They do not seem to need the validation that being a migrant might provide among persons with lower levels of education. (Contains 25 references) (TD)

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THE INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH AS A SOCIAL MARKER IN A MIGRANT COMMUNITY

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The Influence of English as a Social Marker in a Migrant Community

ABSTRACT

The influence of English in two Mexican communities as a social marker is presented in this paper. The data employed here belongs to a corpus analyzed from other perspectives (Matus-Mendoza, 2000; 2001). The corpus was collected in two small populations in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, the United States and Moroleón, Guanajuato, Mexico according to the sociolinguistic methodology (Labov, 1984). Most of the current and former migrant workers include English in their speech as way to separate themselves from the population that has not migrated to the United States. Their interaction with the rest of the population creates admiration and rejection among members of the community in Moroleón. The inclusion of English in the speech decreases as the social level increases: professionals in higher ranks of the society do not use English in their speech though some of them are former migrant workers.

The influence of English in Spanish has been studied from different perspectives (Fernández, 1990; García, 1982; Lipski, 1990; Sánchez, 1982; Silva-Corvalán, 1996; Sobin, 1982). This paper explores the use of English in two communities in two different countries, Mexico and the United States. Here, I employ data from a corpus analyzed from other perspectives in Matus-Mendoza, 2000 & 2001. This time, I look at the inclusion of English in the informants' speech. It is apparent that the informants

include English in their speech as a way to create a distinctive gap between migrants to the United States and permanent residents of their hometown. The paper attempts to explain how the use of English functions as an unconscious class marker that divides the population into norteños (workers in the United States) and non-norteños (persons who work in Mexico either in Moroleón or in other parts of the country). In Labov's words, the "association of linguistic and social values...may remain below the level of social consciousness and result in an unconscious marker" (Labov, 1994, p. 301).

SITES & SAMPLE

The data employed here was collected using the sociolinguistic interview format created by Labov (1984). Mexicans from Moroleón were interviewed in Moroleón and in Kennett Square. A total of eighty-three interviews, thirty minutes long, were recorded in the sites during spring and summer 95 and 96. Informants from all the levels of education were selected randomly to answer questions based on thematic modules that focused on education, work, men's and women's roles, and difficulties associated with emigration and immigration. More men

than women participated in the collection of data due to the fact that some women were not allowed talking to me by their partners. In "...the conjugal relationship...decision making and activities...became highly segregated and demarcated. Husbands regained the dominant position in the family's transactions with the outside world (Perez-Itriago & Guendelman, 1989, p. 279). The breakdown of the interviews by gender reflects the male predominance: 73.50% males (61 interviews) and 26.50% females (22 interviews).

Moroleón, Guanajuato is a textile industrial city on the Mexican plateau. Sixteen hamlets named 'rancherías' surround and economically depend on the city (Ortiz, 1993). People frequently seek employment in the city of Moroleón; when men do not farm the land, they work as masons and women work as seamstresses. However, a great majority of men with low levels of education travel to Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, to work in the mushroom farms. "Today, Mexicans make up the majority of the labor force in the mushroom industry" (García & González, 1995, p. 7; Smith, 1992). Kennett Square is a rural community considered the main mushroom shipping center in the United States (Bastalick, 1982; García & González, 1995). Although there are Mexicans legally

working in the farms, an unknown number of illegal workers can be found in the area. Unfortunately, official figures are not available. "The absence of a direct account of undocumented Mexican migrants...causes serious problems for analysis, and most investigators have been forced to rely on government apprehensions statistics as a crude indicator of the gross inflow" (Massey et al., 1994, p. 705). I rely on the personal accounts provided by the interviewees.

In the following paragraphs, I will develop my argument of the use of English in the speakers' speech as a tool to detach themselves from the non-migrant population. It operates also as a devise to stigmatize the migrant workers. Its use decreases among members of higher social class. Thus, it seems to work as a class marker separating lower from upper levels of the society. The presentation of the use of English in Spanish, first, enumerates the lexical content words (nouns, adjectives and verbs) followed by the functional words that are articles, pronouns, preposition and conjunctions. Only conjunctions are found in the sample.

DATA & ANALYSIS

The community presents what Lipski (1981) has called lexical transference. Silva Corvalán (1996, p. 170) classifies this transference in two types: single-word switches and single-word-borrowings. The first group is formed by items "that preserve English phonology". The second group refers to "items that have been adapted to Spanish phonology". In the last group, Silva-Corvalán divides the group into loans and calques. A loan transfers the form with the meaning. Calques transfer the meanings. From the eighty-three informants interviewed in the communities, forty-five speakers include English items in their speech that represents 54% of the total number of interviews.

The mushroom pickers present mainly lexical loans in their speech. Their limited knowledge of English may account for this fact. "El préstamo de palabras puede producirse incluso cuando el conocimiento de la lengua modelo es muy limitado...(Mendieta, 1999, p. 25). In general the lexical content words (noun, verb, adjective) are more frequent than the functional words (article, pronoun, preposition and conjunction) (Mendieta, 1999). The Single-word loans offer 43% of occurrence; thirty-six speakers

transfer English nouns with their meanings to Spanish. The following sentences exemplify these loans.

(i) "No tengo que preocuparme porque al llegar el *bill* de la luz,..."
'I don't have to worry about, except when the electric bill arrives.'

(ii) "Yo soy mi propio *boss*."
'I am my own boss.'

(iii) "Yo era el encargado de, ¿cómo se dice? el *supervisor* eso era lo que era..."
'I was in charge of...how do you say? Supervisor, that's what I was.'

(iv) "Yo fui *busboy* que fue donde vino la idea más de hacer algo así"
'I was busboy that was when I got the idea of having a restaurant or something like that.'

(v) "Hay platillo que se llama *four season* que siempre como."
'There is an entree called four season that I always eat.'

(vi) "La tengo que llevar con la *baby sitter*."
'I have to take her to the baby sitter.'

(vii) "Sí, envio cheque o *money order*."
'Yes, I send a check or a money order.'

(viii) "También he trabajado en *landscaping*."
'I have also worked in landscaping.'

(ix) "...porque la *border patrol* pedía identificación y yo..."
'...because the border patrol asked for an identification and I...'

(x) "No me dijiste que tienes *social security*..."
You didn't tell me that you have social security card...'

(xi) "Y sólo yo hacía *income tax* y los demás como diablos hacían *income tax*."
'I was the only one who filled the forms of income tax and the rest how in the hell they did their income tax.'

These loans have resulted from the cultural contact of the Mexicans with American society. It should be noted that there are only three instances where the nouns have been adapted to the Spanish morphology by adding a definite article. Sentences one, three and six illustrate this adaptation. The rest of the nouns have not been adapted; they occur within the Spanish syntax without violating its rules. To this extent the sentences above could be considered code switching. Code switching consists in incorporating Spanish and English elements within the confines of a single sentence. It prohibits the violations in either of the two languages. The insertion of isolated lexical items is also considered in the phenomenon (Lipski, 1981). However, the mushroom pickers did not show evidence of being able to "...produce complete, meaningful utterances in the other language" (Haugen, 1969, pp. 6-7) than Spanish. The previous examples illustrate "...préstamos...motivados por la falta de terminología adecuada a los avances de la vida" (Etxebarria Arostegui, 1992, p. 5) in the United States.

The speakers learnt the significants (or significant) and the concept signified (signifié or significatum) of the words borrowed living in the United States. Before coming to Pennsylvania, these

individuals did not know the concepts that they have incorporated into their every day language. Example number eleven mentions *income tax*. Although in Mexico everybody pays taxes, not everybody has to file them individually; it is the employers' responsibility to do so. People who exceed several times the minimum wage, that is the national measure to assess the people's income, file individually their taxes. They are high-income individuals who might have management positions. The mushroom workers farmer the land or work in the construction industry. Thus, they obviously do not belong to the high-income group that requires filing individual taxes. The *Social Security,* example ten, is another unknown concept to the mushroom pickers. Again, the speakers are not familiar with a similar situation in Mexico. People who retired used to receive their pension. Working the land does not guarantee any retirement income. There is no program equivalent to the *Social Security* in Mexico. Example number six illustrates the hiring of a *babysitter* to watch the children. In Mexico the mother or a close relative usually takes care of the children without hiring anybody to perform the task. Thus, all the instances mentioned above illustrate the insertion of English nouns

that have never been part of the speaker's experience before living in the United States.

Sixteen percent of the population has adapted English nouns to Spanish morphology by adding affixes that marked gender and number. In some occasions the spelling has been also adapted to Spanish for example "nailos" < 'nylon', *marqueta* < 'market', *basquetas* < 'baskets' *norseria* < 'nursery', *junque* < 'junk', *escuares* < 'squares' *desfrizado* < 'defrost', *tiqueti, tique* < 'ticket'. The rest of the nouns uttered by the speakers follow the English ortography except for the additions of gender and number. Here are the nouns found, *yarda* < 'yard', *lonches* < 'lunches', *troca* < 'truck', , , *los files* < 'fields', *trailas* < 'trailors', *traque* < 'track', *ganga* < 'gang', and *biles* < 'bils'. It should be noted that Lipski (1981) calls these nouns neologisms. There was only one instance in which the speaker offered both the noun in English and its equivalent in Spanish: "hay ocasiones que de cuatro cuadros, o cuatro *escueres* que le nombran..." 'There are occasions that of four squares or four squares that they call them.' The fact that he says "they call it" 'le nombran' suggests that the speaker is only following the prevailing way of speaking in his working environment; he speaks using the vocabulary uttered in the

mushroom farms. This is an example of the influence of the linguistic market[1]. It is probable that the speakers are influenced by the Puerto Ricans who work in the mushroom farms that have supervisory positions. It seems that Mexicans want to approach their supervisors' "prestigious" way of speaking in the mushroom farms. "Hay algunos individuos cuyo deseo de identificarse con...grupos superiores en términos sociales, económicos...los lleva a tratar de imitar a adoptar la forma lingüística de más prestigio..." (Fernández, 1990, p. 51).

The lexical loan to adapt English verbs to Spanish morphology occurs only in two informants. They form the verbs with the suffixes -iar and -ear to adapt the verbs in English to the conjugation in Spanish. The phenomenon has been documented in Silva-Corvalán (1996) and Sánchez (1982, p. 37) "...a number of verbs borrowed from English...are generally integrated into the –ar conjugation group, with –ear (pronounced –iar) combinations having higher frequency..." than –er, -ir. See the verbs formed:

(xii) "...según para *chequear* el record de si tienen antecedentes o..."

[1] The linguistic market concept was developed by Sankoff and Laberge....[They] constructed a linguistic market index which was designed to measure 'specifically how speakers' economic activity taken in its widest sense requires or is necessarily associated with, competence in the legitimized language' (Fasold, 1994, p. 243-44).

'...they say to check the record if they have it.'

(xiii) "Sabe que se corta todo el hongo...es como decir *clinear* una cama así dejarla limpia ya para el sábado."
'You know all the mushroom is cut...it's like saying to clean a level of mushrooms leaving it clean for Saturday.'

(xiv) "...¿Sabe lo que es *bulufiar*? Presumiendo para que me entienda..."
'Do you know what to bluff mean? Showing off so you can understand me.'

The speakers do not violate Spanish syntax to incorporate the lexical items in their speech. In each case it would be possible to use the equivalent in Spanish: instead of "chequear" the meaning could have been expressed with 'examinar or 'revisar' 'to check' or 'to examine'; in the following example 'limpiar' 'to clean' could have expressed the message. In example number thirteen, when explaining what the speaker meant; he uses the Spanish equivalent without any difficulty or hesitation. Thus, it can be inferred that the speakers do not create verbs selection because of their lack of Spanish vocabulary, but they rather prefer the English equivalent.

"*Aplicación*" 'application' is the only example of single-word calques found in the sample; "a different meaning has been transferred to the lexical item 'application' in the sense of making a request" (Silva-Corvalán, 1996, p. 171).

"Another group of calques are called lexico-syntactic calques" (Silva-Corvalán, 1996, p. 174). They alter semantic and/or grammatical features of the replica language. This multiple-word unit reproduces the word or words in replica language bringing a change in the meaning of the word. The phrase *para atrás* is an illustration of a lexico-syntactic calque. The phrase *para atrás* combines with a number of verbs of movement in Spanish. In these collocations *atrás* conveys its general standard traditional locational meaning of 'to be back' behind, back, backwards (Silva-Corvalán, 1996, p. 175; Sánchez, 1982).

Mexicans have access to the construction based on *para atrás* through their contact with the Puerto Rican community. It has been referred before that Mexicans are under the supervision of the Puerto Rican management. Thus, it seems that they have accommodated to the supervisors' speech. The linguistic market operates here again. These types of combinations "...often make no sense to someone coming from another Spanish speaking country, unless the necessary English code is part of his or her repertoire" (Sánchez, 1982, p. 40). Here are some examples:

(xv) "Pasó tres semanas y *regresó paratrás*... entonces *llegó paratrás*..."

'Three weeks passed and she came back...then she came back…'

(xvi) "Cuando falleció una abuela *fui paratrás* a ver la otra abuela."
'When a grandmother passed away, I went back to see the other grandmother.'

(xvii) "…entonces los *echan* para Tijuana *paratrás*..."
'…then they send them to Tijuana, they send them back…'

It can be seen that the verbs used belong to the ones that take the preposition "back" in English more specifically "came back", "went back", and "turn back". In each case they represent "the use of *para atrás* is a translation of the verbal particle 'back' (Lipski, 1981, p. 89)."

It has been suggested before that the content lexical words (noun, verb and adjective) are more often transferred to the native language than less integrated morphemes such as adverbs and interjections (Mendieta, 1999, p. 52). In this study the interjection "*oh sí*" or simply "*oh*" occurs in thirty-three percent of informants. This may be due to fact that from the perspective "…de su integración en el sistema, la complejidad de funciones gramaticales de las interjecciones…es mínima: se trata de estructuras que desempeñan un papel periférico en la gramática oracional…" (Mendieta, 1999, p. 47). Thus, their presence in the utterances does not affect the grammatical rules of the language that borrows them.

They might "insertarse en cualquier lugar de la oración..." (Mendieta, 1999, p. 47). It is due to this independence that the speakers are not required to be proficient in English to incorporate the interjections in their speech. The following examples illustrate the interjection "*oh sí*":

(xviii) "*Oh sí*, él también es de ahí de Moroleón..."
'Oh, yes, he is also from there, from Moroleón.'

(xix) "*Oh* pus *sí,* las de colado van de colado y las de teja son de teja chica de barro."
'Oh yes, the houses with roofs made out of concrete and the ones made out of small clay tile.)

(xx) "*Oh*, la fiesta de enero que le dicen..."
'Oh, the fair in January how people call it.'

(xxi) "*Oh*, yo estaba aquí cuando mataron a Colosio."
'Oh yes, I was there when they killed Colosio.'

The inclusion of English interjections in Spanish might be explained by the fact that the speakers attribute "...mayor la expresividad..." (Mendieta, 1999, p. 45) to the English interjections than to the Spanish due to their prolonged contact with American society.

Seven linguistic and sociolinguistic factor groups analyzed the data: two linguistic and five sociolinguistic. The linguistic factors seek to determine the presence of intraspeaker or stylistic variation based on an extension of Labov's attention to the speech (1972). The assumption is that the interviewees paid more attention

to their speech at the beginning of the conversation than at the end of it when the speaker might be more involved in what he is saying rather than how he is saying it. However, no stylistic trend was found in the sample.

In the introduction, I have claimed that in general the mushroom workers include English in their speech to separate from the non-migrant workers. However, not all the current or former migrant worker use English in his or her speech. Thus, it is necessary to determine the reason to include or to exclude English in their conversation. I use five sociolinguistic factors to try to establish the cause of the choice. These factors are gender, generation, education, origin, and migration patterns. The term migration patterns refers to the migratory movements that the informants follow, i.e., different types of movements. It is a term commonly used in the literature pertaining to migration studies (Castillo, 1994, p. 270).

The migration patterns followed by the mushroom pickers are an important factor that contributes to favor the influence of English in the informants' speech; all the speakers, except one have worked in the United States at some point in their lives. Interestingly, a woman in Moroleón who has never traveled to the

United States uses the interjection "*oh sí*". Almost all the members of her family are currently working in the United States. Her use of the English interjection illustrates the influence of the environment in the speaker; she accommodates her speech to the people that she interacts with. Not everybody who has worked in the United States include English in his or her speech in Kennett Square and in Moroleón. It is necessary to seek an explanation for this attitude.

This might be explained considering the education factor group. Education divides the sample into four groups: primary (from zero up to sixth grade); middle school (from seventh grade up to ninth grade); secondary (from tenth to twelfth grades, this includes high school or secretarial training), and post secondary (from thirteenth up to seventeenth, professional, doctors, engineers, etc). The factor education indicates that informants with elementary school education as the ones who favor the use of English in their speech, 91%, followed by, at great distance, middle school education, 7%, and one person with post-secondary education, 2%. The presence of the speaker with post-secondary education can be explained considering that he was a migrant worker while he was a student and most of his family still works in the United States. He seems to accommodate to the prevailing

speech of his immediate family. "In their face-to-face dealings...people will begin to accommodate their speech by convergence towards the speech of their interlocutors" (Fasold, 1994, p. 240).

It should be noted that there are more speakers with a post secondary level of education who migrated to the United States, but they do not include English in their speech. Several reasons may account for this; a reason might be that they do not wish to separate from the rest of the society since they have already done that by holding a university degree, i.e., they do not seek the non-migrants approval. They are established members of the community: lawyers and physicians. Moreover, they also hold political positions in the local administration. It should be noted that these speakers do not deny their migration experience, but they do not hold it as the main achievement in their lives. In this sense the use of English might operate as a class marker in that "...occurs with decreasing frequency in the speech of people higher on the social scale" (Chambers, 1999, p. 52). In Moroleón a young female commenting on the migrant workers use of English says, "When the norteños include English words in their conversation, they even laugh at themselves. It seems that they are

not even convinced that they speak English. They know that they are trying to impress their audience."

The influence of English in Spanish has a dual purpose. On none hand, the mushroom workers succeed in separating from the non-migrant workers in their hometown Moroleón. They cause admiration among the wishful migrant workers. On the other hand, they also create criticism and rejection among the people who have never migrated and who consider them a shame for their city. The permanent residents in Moroleón assign them demeaning nicknames that suggest the attitude towards them. One permanent resident exclaims, "These despicable people believe that they have made it, but I know better." 'Estos pobres diablos creen que la han hecho, pero yo sé la verdad.' While migrants "may be valued as successful, upwardly entrepreneurs, they are also a source of envy and threat to those who do not have access to their purchasing power. This leads to social disparities and tensions in the community" (Perez-Itriago & Guendelman, 1989, p. 274).[2]

[2] At the community level, migration becomes deeply ingrained into the repertoire of people's behavior, and values associated with migration become part of the community's values....migration becomes a rite of passage, and those who do not attempt to elevate their status through international movement are considered lazy, unenterprising, and undesirable (Massey et al. 1993:453).

Considering the factor age, the sample is divided into three generational groups: the youngest is comprised of people between the ages of 18 and 34, the mature group includes people between 35 and 55 years old, and the oldest group is made up of individuals more than 55 years old. The factor age stratifies the sample from the youngest to the oldest generation: the young informants favor the influence of English in their speech with 46%, followed by the second generation with 36%, and third generation with 15%. These figures might suggest a change in progress, i.e., the youth starts introducing English in their Spanish. In time older generation may follow suit.

The factor gender places mainly the influence of English among males: 85% for men and 15% for women. It should be reminded that there are few women among the migrant workers; traditionally men migrate to the United States. Thus, the figures above may be due to the overrepresentation of males in the sample. Further collection of data is necessary to assess the prevalence of any gender. For the purpose of this paper, I reserve any conclusion in this respect.

Finally, the factor origin indicates that the group who have moved from the "ranchería" 'small hamlet' to the city of Moroleón

favor the use of English the most with 49% of occurrence followed by the ones from the city with 33%, and the ones from the ranchería 'small hamlet' (who are still living there) with 17%. These are expected results. People who have left the ranchería 'small hamlet' to live in the city have done so to improve their standard of living as well as a sign of social and economic improvement. "Some households...have...improved their class position through migration" (Grassmuck, & Pessar, 1991, p.121). Therefore, including English words in their everyday language is another way of showing off their upward social mobility. It could also be another way that they have to detach themselves from their links with the people in the rancherías. Undoubtedly, there is a stigma attached to the fact of being from, and living in, the rancherías. Table number one summarizes the factors that favor the influence of English in Spanish in the communities of Moroleón and Kennett Square.

Table 1. The influence of English in Spanish by the Sociolinguistic Factors in Moroleón and in Kennett Square

Generation	I	46%	II	36%	III	15%
Education	Elem	91%	Mid.	7%	Post	2%
Gender	Mas.	85%	Fem.	15%		
Origin	Ra-Ci	49%	Ran	17%	City	33%

CONCLUSION

It has been shown that the influence of English operates as a social marker in a great majority of the population who migrates to the United States; either living in Kennett Square of in Moroleón. Although, this influence is not "the overt topic of social comment…[it]…shows consistent…social stratification (markers)…(Labov, 1994, p. 77). The youngest generation, elementary level of instruction and people who moved from the ranchería to the city favor this social marker. These speakers incorporate lexical loans in their speech in spite of their limited knowledge of English. They mainly transfer nouns and verbs that are content lexical loans. They also include a functional word, the interjection "*oh si*". The former or current migrant workers who don't include English in their speech are established members of the community in Moroleón; they do not seem to need the validation that being a migrant might seem to provide among lower levels of education.

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